

President Steve Stowe
First Vice President Jennifer Hu
Second Vice President/IEP Rep Elizabeth Chan
Recording Secretary Vito LaBella
Treasurer/BBP Appointee Marie Brugueras



Council Members
Ghada Amin Maya Rozenblat-ELL REP
Jona Isufi Joyce Xie
Li Ping Jiang Kevin Zhao-BBP Appointee

Administrative Assistant: Natalia Mondesir

Community Education Council District 20

May Business Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2022

Meeting Start Time: 6:00 pm

Present: Steve Stowe, Vito LaBella, Marie Brugueras, Li Ping Jiang, Jennifer Hu, Kevin Zhao, Elizabeth Chan; Jona Isufi; Joyce Xie, Maya Rozenblat, Ghada Amin

I. Meeting Called to Order: Steve Stowe, President

a. Roll Call: Vito LaBella, Recording Secretary

II. Old Business

- a. Approval of April Business Meeting Minutes**
- i. Minutes unanimously approved

III. Open Discussion

a. Steve Stowe discussed upcoming events and deadlines for the CEC

i. Superintendent Evaluation form

1. CEC members are responsible for evaluating the performance of the Superintendent
2. The form is not mandatory, serves as a guide; members can just submit comments to the DOE
3. Members should send their completed form or comments to Steve Stowe by May 18, then it can be discussed before submitting it to the DOE and shared with Superintendent Preto
4. Discussed the categories in the Evaluation Summary and rubric to complete the form
5. Elizabeth Chan asked if this information will be used to hire the next superintendent or does it get factored in to help make the decision

ii. Superintendent Hiring Process Town Hall

1. Asked for May 16-18th, DOE proposed May 25th at 5 pm
2. President Stowe will ask for May 23 or 26th as more members are available then
3. This is a big event, followed by a smaller meeting with the CEC, Presidents' Council, and possibly UFT
4. Council has a chance to interview the candidates in a personal setting, then the candidates leave and the CEC provides feedback to the DOE
5. Currently do not know who the candidates are or how they are picked
6. One resolution asks for small improvements to the system that would allow the CEC to have more input

iii. Legislative Breakfast

1. Will be held at P.S. 127 on May 27th at 8:30 am
- b. Ghada Amin opened a discussion on the difficulty with applying for the Summer Rising Program
 - i. Spots were filled within two hours of the registration opening
 1. Li Ping Jiang was unable to find her child's school on the list
 - ii. The only spaces available are far from home, in other districts and boroughs
 1. Elizabeth Chan stated that there were approximately 100,000 spaces for 900,000 students
 - iii. Vito LaBella stated that last year, there was a program in every school, but it's possible that budget cuts made them reduce availability
 1. Marie Brugueras stated that if the program cannot serve the NYC population, it should be limited to students who need to attend summer school, it was more difficult for anyone trying to enroll more than one child because their information has to be entered together
 - iv. If the household does not have high speed internet, they were at a disadvantage
 - v. Elizabeth Chan suggested that there be some regulation where programs should be limited to the students who live in the community, or those whose parents work nearby
 - vi. Ghada Amin suggested half-day programs, for example 8 am – 12 pm and 12 pm – 4 pm, because 9 am – 6 pm is a long time. This would open up spots for other students
 - vii. Elizabeth Chan suggested the program be a schedule of two or three days each week
 - viii. Jona Isufi stated that at a meeting with Dr. Pretto and Bill Chin, it was explained that this program is a combination of how the DOE and outside companies run their programs, suggested that for the first two weeks, parents go to the schools to see if there are any spots
 1. There was no option to be waitlisted; online you can only see which schools have availabilities, not which ones are already full
 - ix. Steve Stowe suggested that a council member draft an email to the DOE disclosing the difficulties with applying for Summer Rising, the other members will share their experiences with that member; Jona Isufi volunteered; the information collected can be put in to a resolution
- c. Ghada Amin asked about the difference between the regular G&T program and the third – fifth grade and why the DOE does not disseminate all the relevant information so parents can make a decision early
 - i. Li Ping Jiang's son was interviewed and she asked if he was recommended and what the next step would be
 - ii. P.S. 204 Principal Roseann Sainato stated that after teachers nominate the students, a letter would be sent to the families saying that their child has been nominated and what the next step would be

IV. Adjourn

- a. Motion to adjourn-Steve Stowe, Second: Kevin Zhao
 - i. All in favor
- b. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm

Submitted: Natalia Mondesir
Date: May 23, 2022

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Council Members
Ghada Amin Maya Rozenblat-ELL REP
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Administrative Assistant: Natalia Mondesir

Community Education Council District 20

May Calendar Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2022

Meeting Start Time: 7:06 pm

Present: Ghada Amin, Steve Stowe, Vito LaBella, Kevin Zhao, Li Ping Jiang, Elizabeth Chan, Jennifer Hu, Joyce Xie, Jona Isufi

Excused: Maya Rozenblat

Guests: Dr. David Pretto, D20 Superintendent; Dr. Joseph O'Brien, D20 Deputy Superintendent; William Chin, D20 Family Leadership Coordinator; Andrew Gounardes, New York State Senator; Maia Elfont, Director of Constituent Services and External Affairs for Senator Gounardes; Dr. Kerri Durante, PS971 Sustainability Coordinator; Shana Ahmed, STEAM Coach; Sarina Rodriguez, STEAM Coach; Nicole Scarangelo, Director of Menu Management for the Office of Food and Nutritional Services, Nicole Bonica Menu Management Team for OFNS; Donald DeRosa, Liaison from the Office of New York City Comptroller Brad Lander; Sergey Chuprik, Borough Liaison from the Office of NYC Comptroller Brad Lander

I. Meeting Called to Order: Steve Stowe, President

a. Roll Call: Vito LaBella, Recording Secretary

II. Old Business

a. Approval of April Calendar Meeting Minutes

- i. Minutes unanimously approved**

III. New York State Senator, Andrew Gounardes

a. Senator Gounardes discussed fulfilling his campaign promise to get funds for New York City through the lawsuit in which Albany was not giving NYC its fair share of funding

- i. NYC schools are now receiving \$40 billion, as much as schools outside of the city**

b. Mayoral accountability is up for renewal

- i. There are ways that we can strengthen the accountability mechanism of mayoral control specifically about empowering the voices of parents and students in a more meaningful way as it relates to the Panel for Educational Policy**

c. Has been supported of adding seats to the PEP, including representatives of distinct populations of students who are otherwise not represented

- i. Would also like the student advisory member to get a vote**

ii. Strengthening the role of CECs on the council would be positive

d. The Speed Camera Program is up for renewal on July 1st

- i. It's been a battle to have the cameras turned on and kept on, currently they are not on outside of school hours**

- ii. Fought hard to expand the number of school zones to 750 to make sure every elementary and middle school gets a camera
- e. Questions from the Council
 - i. Steve Stowe asked how many parent representatives he would like to see on the PEP, would he support a parent of an English language learner, a parent of a student with an IEP, a parent of a high school student, a parent with a child in either a gifted and talented program or one of the specialized high schools
 - ii. Marie Brugueras extended an invitation to the Legislative Breakfast on May 27th
 - iii. Steve Stowe asked if the extension of mayoral control is just a matter of terms; asked what parents should do if they are concerned about the speed cameras

IV. Presentation on the D20 STEAM Fair

- a. Dr. O'Brien introduced STEAM-based instruction in District 20
- b. Dr. Kerri Durante shared the objectives of STEAM-based instruction and how the expo was put together
- c. Shana Ahmed and Sarina Rodriguez shared the website for the D20 STEAM Exposition, held on April 6th, and played a clip of P.S. 127's project, Spring Into the Sahara
 - i. The website is <https://sites.google.com/schools.nyc.gov/district20steam/home>
 - ii. Each school has a project from that day which can be watched
- d. The website allows family members to see the presentations when they are not able to attend in the day
- e. Students can see the work other schools have done

V. Presentation by the Office of Food and Nutritional Services

- a. Wendy Mota, OFNS District Supervisor, had difficulties logging on the Zoom
- b. Nicole Scarangelo and Nicole Bonica gave the presentation
 - i. OFNS has 25 menus that are available city wide and for different programs that are in different schools, including breakfast, lunch, supper, afterschool snack, and Saturday and Sunday meals when needed
 - ii. All menus are student-driven, provided by student taste-testings and student feedback
 - iii. Changes to the breakfast menu: seasonal fruits, removal of fruit juice (available for medical accommodations)
 - iv. Changes to the lunch menu: introduction of plant-powered Fridays along with Meatless Mondays, reducing processed deli meats, multiple menu options, menu identification (V, VE, H), return of the salad bar
 - v. All menu items must meet the nutritional standards set by the OFNS and Federal government: nutrient standards, prohibited ingredients, and specification
 - vi. Consultant moms reach out with recommendations for halal sites
 - 1. Once a site is certified as Halal, items and recipes are reviewed before the rigorous process of requesting ingredient labels and speaking to the vendors for approved recipes
 - vii. Menu accommodations can be made for allergies, alternative milk options are available, chocolate milk can be removed with the condition that two other milk alternatives be available (1% and Fat Free)

- viii. Schools can be part of the Cafeteria Enhancement Experience (CEE)
 - 1. Four pillars: student choice, fast service and more time to relax, modern style, new furniture
- c. Parents interested in taste testing should reach out to their principal who will reach out to Wendy Mota, or their School Food Service Manager
 - i. Wendy Mota: wmota@schools.nyc.gov
 - ii. Nicole Scarangelo: nscarangelo2@schools.nyc.gov
- d. Questions from the council
 - i. Steve Stowe asked what data is used to make decisions and determining which meals are popular and which are not
 - ii. Ghada Amin asked about having her son's school certified to serve Halal food
 - iii. Vito asked what would be the cost to convert a cafeteria to CEE; is it possible to convert a cafeteria to serve both Halal and Kosher foods
 - iv. Steve Stowe asked a question from the chat: why is the Vegan Fridays menu different than what the students actually get

VI. Report of Superintendent

- a. Dr. Preto acknowledged celebrations happening this month: Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Teacher Appreciation Week and Principal Appreciation Day (already passed)
- b. M.S. 936 Admissions: committed to have a follow up Community engagement to share the results of the admission cycle process or the data behind the impact of the shift, as well as solicit feedback from the Community on that data and the process itself
 - i. Will be attended by first Deputy Chancellor Dan Weisberg, senior leadership from the DOE, Enrollment
- c. Grief Sensitive Schools Initiative: first district in New York City with 100% schools certified in the initiative,
 - i. At least five teachers or staff members at all of our schools have been trained in a set of practices and a framework for supporting children in trauma and crisis
- d. NYC Rise Program: through grant funding or donor funding kindergarten students across New York City were able to have college savings accounts started in their name
 - i. The accounts have been created and the money has been deposited, over 3000 kindergarten students in district 20 have had 529 college savings accounts started on their behalf
 - ii. Total amount of money that has been deposited in the it for each individual student totals over \$300,000 across the district
- e. Will begin assessing progress towards goals set in the District Comprehensive Education Plan (DCEP) on Monday, May 16th
 - i. Data from the Acadience Screeners will be used to monitor progress towards goals
 - ii. IEP and ELL compliance on track to meet the goals
- f. Gifted & Talented expansion will happen in two ways:
 - i. Kindergarten will be expanded by 100 seats in districts that do not currently have traditional kindergarten entry point GMT programs

1. District 20 has seven entry points; will not be adding Kindergarten seats nor will any existing kindergarten seats be changed or removed
 - ii. Third grade will add over 1,000 seats, with a baseline of one program per district
 - iii. Every community school district will have a Kindergarten and third grade entry point
 - iv. Pre-K students will be evaluated by their teacher
 1. Students enrolled in non-DOE programs and have not yet enrolled in school will participate in an interview with DOE staff to confirm eligibility
 2. Families of nominates students can apply to a program and enter a lottery for admissions
 - v. Third Grade Entry: second grade report card grades in ELA, math, science, and social studies will be used to determine top 10% by school
 1. Students in the top 10% will be invited to apply
 2. Families can apply to a program and enter a lottery for admissions
 - vi. D 20 is overcrowded in elementary and middle schools, but a site with space for the third grade program has been identified
- g. Questions from the Council**
- i. Steve Stowe asked about the timing on the G&T applications, if parents will be notified if their children are or are not nominated; when should parents expect to hear if they've been placed in a program; if the 250 kindergarten seats included Brooklyn School of Inquiry
 - ii. Kevin Zhao asked how many seats D20 currently has in Kindergarten and third grade; if there would be another step after filling out the application form
 - iii. Ghada Amin asked what will happen once she applies for her son to be in G&T;
 - iv. Steve Stowe asked is there a way for a student to get the seat in first grade if someone declines a seat or drops out, and if those openings are publicized; where the funding came from for the 529 bank accounts; what is means for the NYC Rise Program to be "opt out"; how the program is set up; if a child already has a 529, can it be merged with this one
- h. Parents can email decegt@nyc.schools.gov if they have any other questions**
- i. Kevin Zhao asked a question from the chat: for students not in DOE Pre-K programs, how do parents apply for the G&T interview
 - j. Marie Brugueras asked how non DOE students in third grade would apply for G&T, would the DOE students have priority over the non-DOE students
 - k. Ghada Amin mentioned the difficulty with applying for the Summer Rise program.
 - l. Steve Stowe reiterated that parents should sign up for a New York City Schools Account
 - i. Jennifer Hu asked if the vendor who provided the website is the same that had the data breach and how secure this site is compared to the previous one

VII. Mosaic Curriculum

- a. Vito LaBella stated that parents reached out to him with complaints about *Our Skin*, a book that had been delivered to schools for their classroom libraries, and similar themed books
- b. This book, and other books, look at everything through a racial lens and says that white people invented race to justify historical atrocities
- c. There's a narrative that only white people can be racist or say racist things, but that is not universally accepted and it shouldn't be taught as fact
- d. Throughout the book the author shows white people and white children victimizing black children

- i. The most problematic part of the book were two pages that show a white teacher correcting a black child for something while he ignores two white children on the stairs laughing and having a good time
- e. There is a question about whether it is appropriate for schools to teach activism
- f. Asked Dr. Preto to comment on the Mosaic Program, the process for getting books into the classroom, who's responsible for making that decision, and what parents can do if they have concerns
 - i. Dr. Preto stated that reading is a foundational skill and it is essential to develop critical thinking to become an active participant in a democratic society
 - ii. Books are the tools for helping people understand complex issues, and limiting access or removing things don't protect students from the challenges that are faced every day in society
 - iii. Parents and guardians, have the right to guide their own children's reading, but parents should not make decisions that impact other people's children and their reading choices
 - iv. Combined social emotional academic learning and infusing culturally relevant responsive practices to focus on the idea of identity by exploring learning activities and practices where children and teachers explore the individual identities as children self-identify in the classroom and in a school and using that information
- g. Steve Stowe asked if it is appropriate for some groups to be targeted as being the problem
- h. Jona Isufi stated that she felt the book was making racism about white versus black, when it is a much broader topic and it is misleading for the book to imply that white people invented racism
- i. Jennifer Hu stated that the highlighted passages were problematic, concerned about the age-appropriateness because she doesn't always know what her daughter is reading in school until her daughter asks questions, asked that parents be notified when controversial books are introduced so parents can address the issues at home
- j. Kevin Zhao stated that there was a discussion on adding materials on different cultures to the curriculum and asked if more books like this one will be added; asked if the books were picked by the teachers or did the DOE pick them and sent them to the schools
- k. Ghada Amin stated that she was pleased that there was a book about Ramadan shared
- l. Steve Stowe stated that having a committee to select works is removing things, the DOE is making decisions that impact the children and parents are concerned about what the Doe is doing with their children
- m. Vito LaBella stated that he feels if the situation was with another group rather than white parents, the DOE would be more empathetic, this book does not elevate everybody
- n. Elizabeth Chan stated that if there is a large number of parents who are complaining about the book, then parents should have a say in what books are taught
 - i. Dr. Preto clarified that the book is not being taught, it was placed in classroom libraries
- o. Vito Labela asked if there is a list of books that are being taught and read to the class, are the books standard across the district and city; it's disingenuous for the DOE to say the book is not part of the curriculum, but it is being delivered to classrooms
- p. Steve Stowe asked if Dr. Preto thought politics should be part of an elementary school student's education

VIII. Public Speaking

- a. Michelle Magnus is curious why Senator Gounardes' office is not promoting more traffic lights instead of speed cameras; finds some of the DOE's culturally responsive and health curriculum to be inappropriate for elementary school kids; Mayor Adams will be making a decision on a mask mandate and asks that the CEC fight for parents' rights over their children

- b. Tamara Stern disagrees with what was said about teaching racism and politics in elementary school; as a black parent to biracial children, she has to teach them about racial profiling

IX. Resolutions

a. Resolution 12 on Mayoral Control

- i. Proposing an extension of mayoral control for three years with certain amendments
 - 1. Calls for more elected parent members, as opposed to the borough president appointing members; should be six elected parent members on the Panel for Educational Policy, and those parent representatives should be voted in by the entire CEC
 - 2. Can't go too far back from mayoral control because the old system, the school board system, did not work very well

ii. Vote:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Steve Stowe- Yes | 7. Jona Isufi- Yes |
| 2. Jennifer Hu- Yes | 8. Li Ping Jiang- Yes |
| 3. Elizabeth Chan- Yes | 9. Maya Rozenblat- Excused |
| 4. Vito LaBella- Yes | 10. Joyce Xie- Yes |
| 5. Marie Brugueras- Yes | 11. Kevin Zhao- Yes |
| 6. Ghada Amin- Yes | |

iii. Motion passes with 10 Yes; 1 Excused

b. Resolution 13 on Superintendent Hiring and Evaluation

- i. An updated version of a shorter resolution that was passed in the fall
- ii. Asks that CECs have a stronger role and more influence in the hiring and evaluation process
 - 1. Out of the first round of candidate selection, the DOE would make recommendations to the CEC, who would then take their chosen candidates candidates to the Chancellor for the final vote

iii. Asks that the Citywide Council on High Schools have equal powers of CECs

iv. Vote:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Steve Stowe- Yes | 7. Jona Isufi- Yes |
| 2. Jennifer Hu- Yes | 8. Li Ping Jiang- Yes |
| 3. Elizabeth Chan- Abstain | 9. Maya Rozenblat- Excused |
| 4. Vito LaBella- Yes | 10. Joyce Xie- Yes |
| 5. Marie Brugueras- Yes | 11. Kevin Zhao- Yes |
| 6. Ghada Amin- Yes | |

v. Motion passes with 9 Yes; 1 Abstain, 1 Excused

X. Adjourn

a. Motion to adjourn: Steve Stowe, Second: Jennifer Hu

- i. All in favor

b. Meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm

Submitted: Natalia Mondesir

Date: May 23, 2022